

## Edmund Pendleton Gaines to Andrew Jackson, August 25, 1817, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### BRIGADIER-GENERAL EDMUND P. GAINES TO JACKSON.

Camp Montgomery, M. T., August 25, 1817.

*General*, Having received several communications from persons settled upon the public land in the tract of country acquired by the Treaty of Fort Jackson, containing general accusations against the Indians—that they had killed cattle and hogs, stolen corn etc, from the settlers—and requesting the interposition of Military force; I have uniformly referred them to the civil authority: because I have in no case during the present year been informed of any thing like an *assemblage* of *force* among the Indians in this quarter of the Territory. Nor could I see any reason why persons who had obtruded themselves upon the public land, contrary to law, should be allowed military protection against the petty offences of which they complained: especially as it did not appear that the civil authority had been opposed; nor even resorted to by the complainants. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the early stage of the Indian troubles leading to the Seminole War, see Bassett's *Jackson*, I. 240, a brief statement, and *Am. St. Papers, Indian Affairs*, II. 54–162, in which many letters are published on the subject. As early as Apr. 6, Gaines asked Jackson for permission to proceed against the Seminoles. These Indians lived on Okolokne Sound, at the mouth of the Appalachicola. They were Creeks and had received among themselves the large number of hostiles who had fled before Jackson in 1814 and refused to join in the treaty of Fort Jackson, in August, 1814. The hostiles in this group were popularly known as “Red Sticks”, because they were believed to have painted their war clubs red. May 10 Gaines sent to them, by Major Dinkins, a demand for the surrender of the Indians

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who had murdered some white settlers. The demand was refused and ten Indian towns sent their defiance. Ten red men had been killed, they said, and only seven whites. The Americans, therefore, owed them a settlement, rather than the Indians the whites. Major Twiggs, commanding at Fort Scott, just north of the Florida line on the Appalachicola, writing to Gaines on Aug. 11, 1817, summed up the situation as follows: "I have not heard a word from the Seminoles that can be relied on; but in my opinion they never will give up a murderer to the whites. In fact the chief of the Fowl town near this who is very frequently among the Seminoles told me eight days ago that the Flint river was the line between us and I must not cut another stick of timber on the opposite side from this, the land was his and he was directed by the Powers above to protect and defend it and he should do so and I would see that talking could not frighten *him* since which I have not seen one of his town. The Indians on the east of the Flint will in my opinion in the event of a movement on that side of the river commence hostilities. It is possible I may be mistaken but I shall think so till the contrary is proved".